(iii) Ineligibility of Central Vigilance Commissioner and every other Vigilance Commissioners, on ceasing to hold office, for any diplomatic assignment, appointment as administrator of a Union Territory and such other assignment or appointment which is required to be made by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.

The Government has taken note of the above issues raised by the Central Vigilance Commissioner.

The recommendations of the Joint Committee of the Parliament will be considered by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha when the Bill, as reported by the Joint Committee, is taken up for consideration.

Accountability of bureaucracy

4510. SHRI C. O. POULOSE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) what are the recommendations of the Fifth Central Pay Commission regarding improving the accountability and efficiency of the bureaucracy; and

(b) how many of them are being implemented by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS AND PUBLIC GRIEVANCES IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) The Fifth Central Pay Commission has made a number of recommendations/ suggestions for improving the efficiency in administration which are given in Section II of their Report (Vol. I) under the heading PROMOTING EFFICIENCY IN ADMINISTRATION. The Commission's recommendations/suggestions in regard to accountability have been given in Section III of their Report (Vol.I) under the heading HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. The highlights of the action taken by the Government which are relevant in the context of these recommendations are as follows:

(i) The Government have taken up simplification of laws, rules and procedures for improving efficiency of the various organisations. The Government had set up a Commission on

Review of Administrative Laws in May 1998 to make recommendations for repeal/amendment of laws, regulations, procedures, legislative processes with a view to improve service delivery and transparency in the functioning of the Government. The Commission submitted its report in September 1998. The important recommendations include repeal of almost 50% of Central Laws (1382 out of 2500), documentation of administrative laws by all the Ministries/ Departments, development, of a viable alternative disputes resoultion machinery etc. Most of the Ministries/Departments have initiated action to bring about suitable amendments/ modifications in or repeal of Acts and Laws being administered by them. All the unrepealed Central Acts of All India applicaiton have been placed in the NICNET AND INTERNET.

(ii) A large number of Ministries/Departments/Organisations with considerable public interface have introduced Citizen's charters indicating broadly the quality of service the public would be entitled to, within a specified time frame. Information and Facilitation or Help Counters have been set up by 65 Ministries/Departments/Central Government Organisations to provide information on procedures and the programmes and schemes of the concerned organisations as well as to access information pertaining to the status of individual cases.

(iii) The Freedom of Information Bill, 2000 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 25, 2000.

(iv) Steps have also been taken in the recent past to make the vigilance machinery more effective. These include the steps for strengthening the institution of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).

(v) The matter regarding reducing levels of consideration has received the attention of the Government from time to time. The Government's considered view in this regard has been that there could not be a rigid formula for fixing the number of levels of consideration and that efforts should, however, be made to move towards fewer levels.

(vi) Steps have been taken by the Ministries/Departments to delegate and decentralise powers to field units and to other levels of Government to enable decisions and service delivery at the lowest operational levels.

(vii) The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances has established a decentralised Public Grievances as well as Staff Grievance Redress Machinery in all Ministries/Departments/offices of the Central Government under the charge of a Senior Officer. The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances has requested the Central Government Ministries/Departments/ Organisations to take measures to strengthen this machinery comprising:

(a) Availability of designated Grievance Officers at the specified hours to hear and receive grievances of the public as well as the employees;

(b) Fixing time limits for disposal of work relating to public as well as staff grievance and strictly adhering to such limits;

(c) Picking up grievances appearing in newspapers and taking expeditious action for acknowledgement and final disposal thereof;

(d) Monitoring grievances on a quarterly/monthly and weekly basis upto the level of Secretary.

A computerised WEB-based Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (PGRAMS), as part of the minimum agenda of e-governance, has been developed and is in the process of implementation in Ministries/Departments for effective registration, handling and monitoring of grievances.

The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances also gives wide publicity annually through newspapers about the existence of Public Grievance Redress Machanism in the Government in India.

(viii) The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances has been acting as catalyst in modernising Government offices by providing funds under a Plan Scheme

to various Ministries/Departments to support their efforts for improving their work environment through functional layout, better services to the people, efficient management of data through reduction in paper work by using modern equipments and effective records management.

(ix) The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances also offers help and advice to the Ministries/ Departments in performance of O&M activities which include minimising level of consideration in the disposal of work, fixation of time limits for disposal of cases etc.

(x) Some of the powers of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) have been delegated to the administrative Ministries/Departments through suitable amendments in Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961. The approval of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) is now required only for appointment to posts which carry a salary (excluding allowances) or a maximum in a salary scale (excluding allowances) of Rs. 6700 per month (pre-revised) or higher. Thus, the powers to appoint Deputy Secrtaries/Directors stand delegated to the administrative Ministries/Departments.

(xi) The Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances has formulated a minimum agenda for e-governance for implementation in all Central Ministries/ Departments under the guidance of a High Powered Committee chaired by the Cabinet Secretary. Officers of the rank of Joint Secretary have been designated as IT Managers and entrusted with the responsibilities to oversee the implmentation of the minimum agenda and for maintaining the websites in the concerned Ministry/Department.

(xii) The number of days of Casual Leave for Central Government employees has been reduced from 12 days to 8 days in a year w.e.f. 1 January 1998.

(xiii) No holiday is now required to be declared in the event of death other than the incumbent President of India or the incumbent Prime Minister of India.

(xiv) Action has been initiated by the Government to amend the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act, 1970 with a view to do away with the aboiliton part while retaining the regulatory part of the Act with stringent provisions for ensuring welfare of the contract labour. Once the new legislation is enacted, many of the functions which the Central Government departments are performing in non-strategic areas can be out-sourced.

(xv) In the recent past, three Departments namely, Department of Industrial Development, Department of Sugar and Edible Oil and the Department of Supply have been abolished/ merged. In addition, the Departments of Telecom Services and Telecom Operations have been corporatised with effect from 1 October, 2000. Government has also recently approved the proposal to restructure the Income Tax Department with a view to improve efficiency and effectiveness in direct tax administation through induction of technology. This exercise is expected to generate savings and increase productivity in terms of growth in direct tax revenues.

(xvi) It has been decided to continue the five-day-weak working system in the civil administrative offices of the Government of India. However, the Departments whose functions are predominantly marked by public dealings or are of a commercial nature, and at present are functioning on five-day-week basis, are required to review the existing arrangements and switch over to six-day-week wherever feasible.

(xvii) Commission's recommendations/suggestions relating to introduction of Performance Related Increment Scheme, reintroducing Annual Confidential Reports for Group 'D' personnel etc. were not accepted by the Government.